

THE HONOLULU ADVERTISER
17 March 1977

The CIA and freedom...

The Central Intelligence Agency's director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, seems to be examining the CIA's problem of maintaining an intelligence system in an open society.

He says he would like to make public as much information as possible, quite in contrast with CIA directors of the past who maintained a sort of iron curtain about the agency. He also wants an area of "privacy."

TURNER SEEMS conscious of the rights of the press to inform the public what government is doing, as guaranteed under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He promises these will not be violated. In the matter of "leaks" he would not try to hold the press responsible, nor would he suggest sanctions against the media.

The problem of disclosure, Turner said, must remain the responsibility of the media.

He pointed to the case of the CIA payments to King Hussein as an

example. His contention is that the revelation of the secret payments damaged the confidence of many foreign countries in the U.S. But shouldn't the public know of such payments?

Turner would like to see some sort of penalty against government officials who disclose national security secrets to the press—a sort of "Official Secrets Act" as the British have. Vice President Walter Mondale quite properly disagrees with that theory. He would oppose such restrictions.

WITH ITS emphasis on open government, the democratic process is not easy. But it is what distinguishes us from most of the world, where authoritarianism is growing.

The inherent tension between a free press and government is best preserved for the protection of American liberties.

If, as time goes on, Turner's performance reflects an understanding of this, he will be greatly enhancing the CIA's credibility.

... and the press

One area where the CIA is not yet responsive enough is in the use of news reporters and editors abroad as agents or paid sources of information.

This is of special concern because the U.S. must stand for the free flow of information in the world uncontrolled by governments for their own ends. We can't do that honestly by using those who handle that news as intelligence agents.

IN THE FACE of past revelations and protests from American news organizations, the CIA reportedly has terminated such relationships with American news personnel.

But the agency has so far refused

to give assurances it won't employ foreign journalists. That continues to subvert our national policy on the free flow of information, as well as cast a shadow over honest friends of the U.S. in foreign countries.

With so much talk of a new morality in American foreign affairs, the continuing CIA policy stands in ironic contrast to these words from President Carter's inaugural address:

"We will not behave in foreign places so as to violate our rules and standards here at home, for we know that the trust which our nation earns is essential to our strength."

By ending its use of foreign journalists, the CIA would only be practicing what the President is preaching.